

Civic + Industrial = Success? Failure?

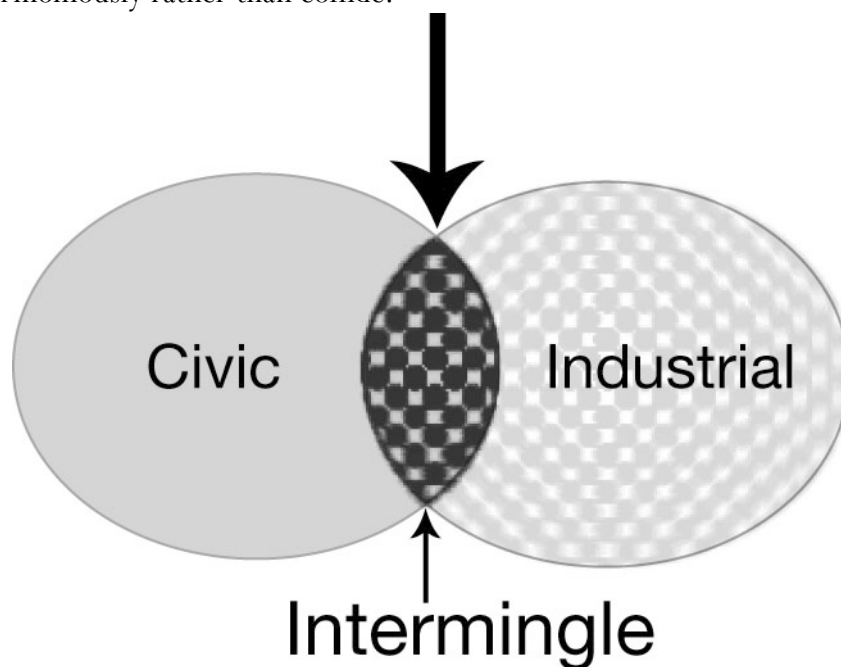


Greer Goodmonson Final Paper ARCH 549 Fall 2006

Introduction

Civic and industrial areas rarely intermingle. Civic use is celebrated loudly; its presence marked clearly on tourist brochures and street signs. Industrial use areas are often relegated to isolated islands within a city or forced out completely. They are often intimidating vistas of windowless facades, bellowing chimneys, mysterious tanks, and ominous mechanical rumblings. Industrial areas are a place the public does not want to go, and in turn, a place that does not want the public to enter.

The World Wood Institute will be a unique combination of heavy industry and tourist attraction. Half functioning sawmill, half museum and advocacy center, the Institute will typify two disparate land use areas. In this paper I will explore what happens when these two uses intimately mix. By looking at specific examples where civic use occurs in a predominately industrial area, I will assess whether the integration is successful or fails. Essentially, I will try to figure out why civic and industrial areas get along or why they fight. Understanding the intricacies of the relationship will help guide the design of the World Wood Institute. The two halves of its dual nature must fit together harmoniously rather than collide.



Definitions

Civic areas: for the people

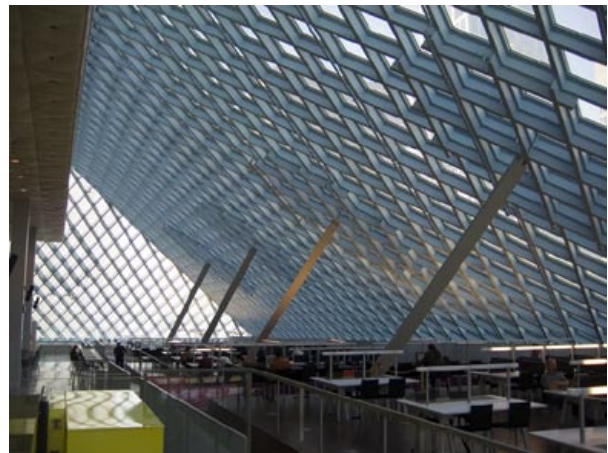
“Civic” spaces are those especially dedicated to the betterment of the people or entire city. These are places like town halls, parks, museums, public squares, stadiums, libraries, and public transportation. They are spaces that are intended for the masses; spaces that often originate from the efforts of the masses. They come in all shapes and sizes and are generally spread out through a city with clustered areas of concentration.



Portland's Eastside Esplanade



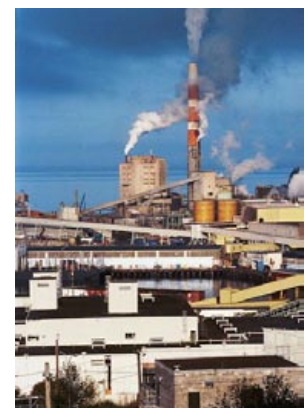
Portland's Keller Fountain



Seattle Public Library

Industrial areas: for the machines

“Industrial” places that are dedicated to making stuff. They usually take raw materials and turn them into some form of finished product. These places are things like factories, distribution centers, chemical processing, shipyards, and mills. They often operate at a large scale and require stor-



age and transit accommodations for a huge amount of materials. For this reason, they are often sited along ocean bays, deep rivers, railroads, and freeways.



Examples of industrial landscapes

Why is industry isolated?

Pollution. Industrial zones are notoriously pollution producing. Many processes produce hazardous byproducts to which the public should not be exposed. International catastrophic accidents draw attention to major mishaps. For example, in the 1984 Bhopal catastrophe, the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India accidentally released lethal gas into its town. Between 3,000-8,000 people died immediately, 150,000-600,000 were injured, and 15,000 people died eventually as a result (“Bhopal Disaster”). When a terrible event like this occurs, it makes everyone look at the local smokestack in a different manner...”when is the local factory going to kill us?” Whether the threat is perceived or real, people naturally do not want to be near pollution.

Noise. Industrial areas often have noisy machinery operating 24 hours per day. Noise can carry beyond the property boundary, so it is important that nearby neighbors not be noise sensitive. This is one of the reasons why industry is kept away from areas that need sound control, such as sleeping people and performance spaces.

Ugliness. Industrial sites can be a tangled confusing mess of chimneys, pipes, valves, truck lanes, storage tanks, rust, peeling paint, mud, out-of-date equipment. The purpose of all the parts is often mysterious. They are designed out of necessity rather than aesthetics, so they sometimes appear chaotic. As opposed to a retail store designed to entice customers, industrial areas are designed to maximize production efficiency. As a result, they can appear ugly or frightening to many people.

Hard to Relocate. Industry space is often difficult to relocate because of the size of equipment. Rather than moving a group of desks as required in an office move, an industrial move might require moving specialized equipment (and structures) that are the size of a city block or bigger. Hence, when they locate in a particular place, they want to know that they will be able to stay there as long as needed because uprooting is so difficult. Guarantees in the form of zoning regulations give industrial entities the ability to operate in perpetuity without interference from future conflicting uses.

Size. Industrial sites are often huge and do not fit within the established city grid. Rather than breaking the grid, they are often isolated into areas where everything around them is huge too.

Successful Intermingling

The following examples are cases where civic and industrial uses come together in a positive manner.

Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Portland, OR

1945 SE Water Avenue

Museum, planetarium, theater

The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) moved to this predominantly industrial location in 1992. The museum sits along the east side of the Willamette River, just across from downtown Portland. It is just south of the Central Eastside Industrial Protection area. Industrial neighbors include Portland General Electric and grocery distributors. The presence of OMSI has spurred additional civic projects nearby such as the Eastside Esplanade and the Portland Opera headquarters. Not only is the site highly visible from I-5, but also from downtown Portland, providing a constant reminder of its presence.



More evidence that the relationship works for the museum is that they are reasonably financially secure. They recently bought 6 acres to the south in preparation for future expansion (Barnett). As well, museum attendance is up. “The museum claims 21,000 households as members and welcomes more than 700,000 visitors a year. Another 350,000 students and others benefit from programs that the museum brings to schools and other venues statewide” (Barnett). Transportation to OMSI is simple. Signs guide car drivers from the freeway. And many bus lines get near the museum. A future line of the Max may have a stop actually at OMSI. The adjacent esplanade gives visitors a means of experiencing the banks of the Willamette River.

Why OMSI is successful:

- The museum focus is tangentially focused on industry
- Public and car transportation is easy and widely used.
- Is located close to downtown Portland and dense residential neighborhoods
- Located along the Willamette River, which has always been both civic and industrial.

Lowry Performing and Visual Arts Centre

Salford, UK

Gallery, Lyric Theatre, public plaza, hotel, restaurant, shops

The Lowry Performing and Visual Arts Center is a multi-use venue for entertainment and education. It is located “on the edge of the 1894 Manchester ship canal in the North of England’s former industrial heartland” (Hammond 32). It is situated on what was a disused former industrial site, along the



The Lowry Center

north side of what is still an active transport canal. Industrial activity appears to be heavier along the south side of the canal rather than the north. On the north, residential complexes are located surprisingly close to both industrial and agricultural uses; this area is fascinating because it seems to be all uses completely intermingled.

One of the primary design goals of the Lowry was to create exciting viewpoints, both of the activities occurring inside the centre as well as the surrounding landscape (Hammond 32). Outdoor promenades along the quays give visitors a chance to meaningfully interact with the industrial canal. Views provide glimpses of nearby industrial evening lights, and the sense of place is constantly reinforced. Transportation is simple, as the metro train connects directly to Manchester center. There is also bus and car parking.

Why The Lowry is successful:

- Is beautiful
- Views
- Transportation
- Placed on the less heavy side of the canal



Industrial area surrounding the Lowry



Manchester ship canal

Intermingling Failures

The following illustrate places where something has gone dramatically wrong between the civic and industrial uses. They do not get along.

Queen Mary, Long Beach, CA

1126 Queens Highway

6 restaurants, 4 clubs, 365 hotel rooms, 14 shops on board and 9 ashore.

Submarine, old spruce goose dome.

The Queen Mary is located in Long Beach, CA, the second biggest port in the United States, after Los Angeles. It is docked at the mouth of the Los Angeles River on a pier in the port. The surrounding area is dominated by shipping. Long Beach port shipped nearly 7 million containers in 2005; it is a heavily used shipping center for the United States (AAEA).

The Queen Mary was originally an ocean liner, but has now been converted to a hotel, restaurant, and tourist attraction. Indicating that there may be problems, the Queen Mary recently filed for bankruptcy because of \$3.4 in overdue rent payments to the City of Long Beach. “This is a dispute over future development

of the land around the Queen Mary,” said the president of Queen Mary (Hardin). Relations with the city of Long Beach are contentious, as shown by the 2005 fireworks dispute with the city which ended a 21-year tradition of fireworks from the boat. (PR Newswire US).



Map of Long Beach port area

The surrounding area is a dead zone for public activity. According to Ms. Stewart, a Long Beach resident and former employee of the Queen Mary, Disney once owned the adjacent area and established a series of retail shops that have since been boarded up. “City officials have hoped development of the surrounding acres would spark attendance and interest in the historic ship, although past development plans have failed to materialize” (Gerwitz). There is nothing else around to entice visitors.



Queen Mary

As well as failing financially, there is general disinterest in the attraction. Ms. Stewart notes “No one in Long Beach cares about it. It’s OK to look at from far away, but going to it offers no excitement at all.”

Transportation to the Queen Mary is difficult. The museum is serviced by a boat connecting it to Shoreline Village, a shopping and entertainment hub in Long Beach, although the main Queen Mary website provides no information on the boat. As is typical in California, private vehicle is by far the most commonly used form of transportation. Driving involves navigating through lanes that are dominated by commercial trucks. This, Ms. Stewart told me was “kind of scary, but kind of fun.”

Why the Queen Mary is a failure:

- Financial disagreements with city
- Is literally an island of civic use in an industrial ocean. There are no connections to anything nearby that is of interest to the public.
- Transportation is confusing and requires significant effort on the part of the visitor.

Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, Boston, MA

Islands, ferry service, tours, hiking, camping

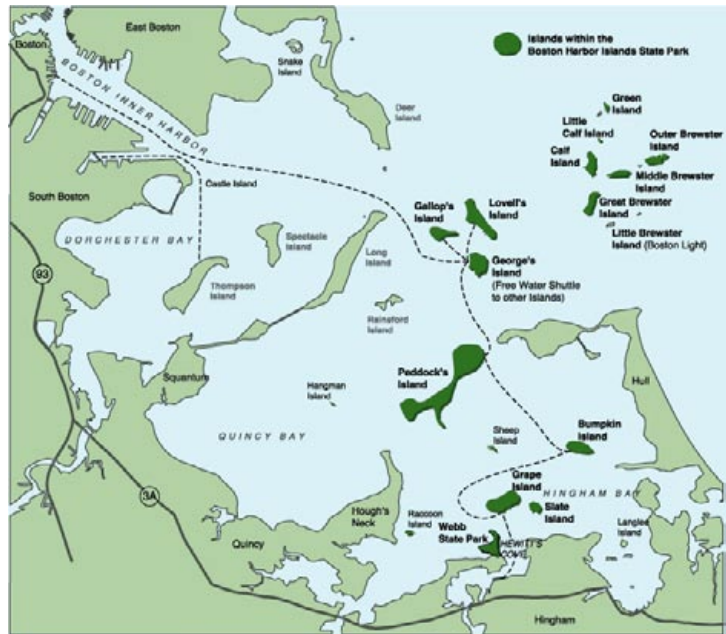
Located directly in the middle of the Boston Harbor are several tragically overlooked islands.

The Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area consists of 34 islands located just offshore.

Regular ferry service to the main island leaves from downtown Boston and infrequent boat service is provided between the smaller islands. The ferry ride passes the dramatic Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Facility, gigantic shipping container yards, and in the distance you can easily see the liquid natural gas storage tanks. The islands contain hiking trails, camping, and historical government buildings to explore. Located in the middle of major shipping lanes, these are literally islands of civic use.



Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Facility



Map of Islands

They truly are a great idea, but the end result is totally strange. Barely anyone in Boston knows of their existence. Despite the high visibility designation of “National Recreation Area”, the area is consistently overlooked as a place to visit. Although they are right in the middle of everything, these islands maintain the feel of a deserted leprosy colony (and interesting, one of the islands was actually used as a leprosy colony in the past).

Water lovers experience frustration on the islands because the water here is to be looked at, not touched. Years of pollution have tainted the harbor. Though cleanup efforts are improving it, few are yet willing to brave swimming in these areas.

Why the Harbor Islands succeed:

- Views of industry
- Transportation – via boat
- Federal support



Boston Harbor Islands

Why the Harbor Islands fail:

- Dirty water; no meaningful connection the surrounding area
- Not well publicized, the public does not know they are there
- Not visible from the city

Conclusion

Looking at these examples of civic places in industrial areas, patterns begin to surface. Views, simple transportation, and meaningful connections with the surrounding area emerge as characteristics that contribute to the successful integration of civic and industrial areas. Political disagreements, pollution, and difficult transportation make the relationship significantly more difficult. Using the information gained from these sites will help guide the site selection and building design for the World Wood Institute.

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